

ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING DIVISION

**REPORTING PROVINCIAL
ACHIEVEMENT TEST
RESULTS TO PARENTS IN
JUNE PILOT EVALUATION
2005-2006**

January 2007

**REPORTING PROVINCIAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST RESULTS
TO PARENTS IN JUNE PILOT EVALUATION 2005-2006**
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This document is intended primarily for:

System and School Administrators
Teachers
Alberta Education Executive Team and Managers

And may be of interest to:

Parents
Education Stakeholders
Community Members

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005, Alberta Education conducted a pilot project which assessed principal and parents' views of receiving preliminary Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) results in June. The results from the 2005 study necessitated the need to expand the project to assess teachers' perceptions in addition to that of principals and parents. In May of 2006, Alberta Education sent a letter to the Superintendent of each public, separate, and francophone school division in Alberta advising them of a pilot project for reporting preliminary Grade 6 and Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) results to parents and students. Each Superintendent was asked to identify one school with a Grade 6 class and one with a Grade 9 class for participation in this pilot. Some jurisdictions elected to have one school participate at both the Grade 6 and Grade 9 level while other jurisdictions chose to have one school participate at the Grade 6 level and another at the Grade 9 level. Alberta Education did not control the school selection process; it was left up to each superintendent to choose school(s) at his/her discretion. Fifty-six (out of a total of 62) school jurisdictions submitted school names by the deadline, yielding 102 schools to participate in the pilot project. One jurisdiction submitted two school names after the deadline; which were not included in the analysis. Section 4 of this report compares the first and second years of this pilot study.

The Language Arts PATs include a written response portion, but the other PATs contain only multiple choice questions. In the case of the Language Arts PATs, parents were provided with the results of only the multiple choice section. Schools were also given the option of using the reporting template developed by Alberta Education or using their own method of reporting the results to parents. In the past, parents had not received the results until Alberta Education sent out the final marks in the fall of the next school year.

The Provision of Preliminary Provincial Achievement Test Results for Grades 6 and 9 project was initiated to respond to the report of Alberta's Commission on Learning that encouraged more communication with parents about the importance of Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) and classroom assessments in their children's schooling. The project also responds to parents and the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) which supports having the individual results of achievement tests being provided within the same school year as the children write the tests.

Some limitations apply to this study, primarily relating to sample size. There was also a strong tendency for schools that had already been locally marking students' PATs to participate in the pilot, meaning that they may have had a more positive view of preliminary marking than the general population. These factors may contribute to error variance in study results, suggesting that some caution should be applied in generalizing study findings to the population of study schools.

Parents and teachers were asked on their surveys if they would volunteer to participate in a follow-up telephone interview. Twenty-nine (29) parents volunteered and twenty-nine (29) teachers volunteered. Principals were informed that they may be contacted for a follow up interview. In the end, it was decided that the follow-up interviews would not be necessary given the amount of information returned by respondents through the surveys.

Key results of the surveys include the following:

1. The majority of parents (85%), teachers (78%) and principals (72%) recommended that Alberta Education expand the program for the provision of preliminary provincial achievement test results for Grades 6 and 9 to all schools. (p. 10, 22 & 35)
2. A large percentage of principals (54%) indicated that they thought students and parents appreciated receiving the results in June, while 43% of principals reported not having received any feedback to date. (p. 33)
3. Most parents (76%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with receiving the results in June. (p. 7)
4. Most principals (91%) indicated that parents or students did not express any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary marks, final marks, or other related issues. Only 9% of principals indicated that matters of misunderstanding arose with students or parents. (p. 32)
5. Most principals (77%) indicated that locally marking the PATs did not cause any challenges for their staff (p. 25). Eighty-five percent of teachers expressed the same opinion. (p. 12)
6. A majority of parents (74%) indicated that receiving the results assisted or added value to their understanding of their child's level of achievement (p. 4), while 40% of principals and 16% of teachers thought receiving the results assisted parents. A large proportion of principals (56%) and teachers (72%) had not received any feedback. (p. 18 & 31)
7. Many principals and teachers (43% and 27%, respectively) indicated that reporting the preliminary results assisted or added value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement. A large proportion of principals (41%) and teachers (51%) reported not having received any feedback on the matter. (p. 17 & 30).
8. The majority of principals (73%) thought that having the locally scored PAT data available served to enhance teachers' understanding of their students' achievement. (p. 29)

The following is a set of recommendations based on the results of the principal, parent and teacher surveys.

The study results support the following recommendations:

1. Initiate intensive consultations with the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta School Boards Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association regarding reporting of grade 6/9 PAT results to parents in June over a two year period. In 2006-07, the report should be used to encourage all schools to participate and to communicate PAT results with parents while preparing for universal reporting to parents in June 2008.
2. Within a context of use of results of PATs, this report provides the basis for additional and more comprehensive dialogue with the Alberta Home and School Councils Association regarding the next steps in planning for more win-win scenarios for the use and interpretation of PAT results with parents in June. As such the report should be circulated via a broad distribution plan to stimulate enhanced opportunities for on-going dialogue with parents regarding defining more clearly what parents want to know regarding comprehensive assessment information within a holistic approach to assessment communications from teachers to parents.

3. Department and stakeholder policies and procedures relating to student evaluation or classroom assessment should be reviewed in relationship to this report and with the overall objective of examining how the teaching profession can improve reporting to parents how their children are doing in school.
4. Better communication strategies should be developed by Alberta Education for parents regarding the potential for variance between preliminary and final PAT results and related issues as a prerequisite for province-wide implementation of this initiative.

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, Alberta Education conducted a pilot project which assessed principal and parents' views of receiving preliminary Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) results in June. The results from the 2005 study identified the need to expand the project to assess teachers' perceptions in addition to those of principals and parents. In May of 2006, Alberta Education sent a letter to the Superintendent of each public, separate, and francophone school division in Alberta advising them of the pilot project for reporting preliminary Grade 6 and Grade 9 PAT results to parents and students. Each Superintendent was asked to identify one school with a Grade 6 class and one with a Grade 9 class for participation in this pilot. Some jurisdictions elected to have one school participate at both the Grade 6 and Grade 9 level although most jurisdictions chose to have one school participate at the Grade 6 level and another at the Grade 9 level. Alberta Education did not control the school selection process; it was left up to each superintendent to choose school(s) at his/her discretion. Fifty-six (out of a total of 62) school jurisdictions submitted school names by the deadline, yielding 102 schools to participate in the pilot project. One jurisdiction submitted two school names after the deadline and these schools were not included in the analysis. Section 4 of this report compares the first and second years of this pilot study.

The Provision of Preliminary Provincial Achievement Test Results for Grades 6 and 9 project was initiated to respond to a report developed by Alberta's Commission on Learning (ACOL) that encouraged more communication with parents about the importance of Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) and classroom assessments in their children's schooling. The project also responds to parents and the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) which supports having the individual results of achievement tests being provided within the same school year as the children write the tests.

Alberta's Achievement Testing Program at grades 3, 6 and 9, is one of the provincial learner assessment programs administered by Alberta Education. The tests are closely aligned with the provincial curriculum to assess student learning of selected curricular knowledge and skills. The tests provide information to students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, trustees, Alberta Education, and the public. The Language Arts PAT includes a written response component in addition to the multiple choice section. The other achievement tests include only multiple choice questions. Preliminary reporting is restricted to the multiple choice questions.

The pilot project sought to have schools report students' preliminary marks on the grade 6 and 9 PATs to parents in June. Parents also receive the *Individual Student Profile* (ISP) in the fall of the next school year (see Appendix E for a sample ISP). The ISP displays the student's final marks on both the multiple choice and written response portions of PATs. The preliminary marks could vary from the final marks because of the exclusion of the written response portions of the Language Arts exams, and also due to marking errors. In June, parents received their child's marks as a raw score. In the fall, the ISP includes the written response mark and shows the cut score for the acceptable and excellence levels, or the mark that is received after test equating is performed. Test equating is a process of determining the score-equivalent on a new test relative to a previous test. Since it is almost impossible to construct tests from year to year that are precisely equal in difficulty, the cut score represents a standard that may change slightly from year to year, but the equating process ensures that the test difficulty in relation to student performance remains the same.

METHODOLOGY

After finalizing the list of schools that the jurisdictions had selected to be part of the pilot project, a Research Officer with Alberta Education randomized the sample's order and then chose every second school on the list. In this way, approximately half of the schools were selected to receive principal, teacher, and parent surveys and the other half were selected to receive principal and teacher surveys only¹. Depending on whether a school was participating at only the Grade 6 or Grade 9 level or at both the Grade 6 and Grade 9 levels, each school received either one or two teacher surveys. For each school, class size numbers were determined by using Alberta Education's PRISE software and the correct number of parent surveys was sent to pilot schools to be distributed to parents. Each school also received one principal survey. Each pilot school received a mailed package with the principal survey, teacher survey(s), parent surveys (if applicable), and postage paid envelopes for respondents to return the surveys to Alberta Education².

The parameters of the pilot project specified that each jurisdiction submit one classroom at the Grade 6 level and one at the Grade 9 level. Some jurisdictions elected to select more than one class per grade level. Those schools were welcome to report the preliminary results to parents, but the additional grades were not surveyed as part of the pilot project's evaluation.

For the schools from Alberta's Francophone school authorities that were included in the pilot project, the principal, teacher, and parent surveys were translated into French. Alberta Education informed the Francophone schools that these versions were available should staff or parents feel more comfortable responding in French than in English.

In total, 102 surveys were sent to pilot school principals. Out of this, 75 surveys were returned; a completion rate of 74%. One hundred and twelve surveys (112) were sent to pilot school teachers. Seventy-five³ (75) were returned for a completion rate of 67%. One thousand, three hundred, and ninety-four (1394) parent surveys were sent to schools to be distributed to parents. Alberta Education received 91 surveys, representing a completion rate of 7%.

To gain further insight into the responses indicated by respondents, statistical procedures were run using the data. A chi-square test of independence was used to measure the association between two variables. A statistically significant result would indicate that the observed count is not due to chance and that there is a relationship between the two variables.

Limitations and Delimitations

Sampling limitations mean that some cautions should be placed on the survey results. There was potential for bias in the process used for selecting schools. Because many principals said that the jurisdiction asked for volunteers to participate in the pilot project and many also said that their schools had been marking PATs locally for years, it is possible that principals of those schools

¹ Those jurisdictions that submitted school names after the deadline of June 1 were not included in the analysis.

² Schools that were submitted to Alberta Education after the packages had been mailed out were given the opportunity to complete the principal and teacher surveys by e-mail.

³ Alberta Education received seventy-five surveys from teachers. 13 of them were considered additional or supplemental because they had been photocopied at the school and completed by multiple teachers at the same grade level.

who had been marking all along would be more likely to volunteer or be asked to participate in the pilot project than would those principals whose schools had not been locally marking in the past. As a result, the pool from which the sample of schools was drawn may have been more likely to support preliminary marking and look more favourably upon expanding the project.

Overall, a small survey return rate makes it difficult to draw conclusive results from the data. Due to time and resource limitations only mail out surveys could be sent to respondents. For example, of the 1,394 parent surveys that were sent out, only 91 were returned, generating a 7% return rate. In order to have a statistically valid study of parents' responses to the pilot project, more surveys would need to be completed. To be statistically valid, the study would require a return rate of 43% (605) for a survey population of 1,394. Likewise, 101 teacher surveys and 93 principal surveys would have to be completed in order to generalize the results to these populations. Therefore this study can present only preliminary indications of parents', principal and teacher responses to preliminary reports of students PAT results. However, the sample size is high enough to permit valid and reliable validation of parent, principal and teacher attitudes for the sampled schools.

SECTION 1: SURVEY WITH PARENTS OF STUDENTS WHOSE SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PILOT PROJECT

One thousand, three hundred, and ninety-four (1394) parent surveys were sent to schools to be distributed to parents. Alberta Education received 91 surveys, representing a completion rate of 7%.

1.1 Did reporting of the preliminary PAT results assist or add value to your understanding of your child's achievement?

The majority of parents (74%) indicated that reporting of the preliminary PAT results helped them to understand their child's level of achievement, while one quarter of parents said that the process did not assist them in being able understand their child's level of performance on the PATs.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	71	74.0
No	24	25.0
Don't know/Did not receive	1	1.0

n=96

For those parents who further elaborated on the issue as to whether the preliminary PAT results assisted or added value to their understanding of their child's achievement, the majority (28%) said they appreciated receiving their child's results in a timely manner. However, three parents (12%) who answered in the negative stated that their child's PAT results do not align with their report card marks.

Three respondents indicated that reporting of the preliminary PATs assisted them in being able to understand their child's achievement, but went on to discuss either issues or problems. One respondent said that the process did not assist them, but indicated they still preferred to be informed of their child's results. Refer to the following tables for a review of all responses.

Table 1
Parents' comments as to whether the reporting of the preliminary PAT results assisted or added value to their child's achievement

Response	n (%)
Appreciated receiving the results in a timely manner	7 (28.0%)
PAT results do not align with child's report card marks	3 (12.0%)
Able to address child's weak areas over the summer break	2 (8.0%)
Did not receive results	2 (8.0%)
Interested in knowing if the child met the standard set by Alberta Education	1 (4.0%)
Demonstrates that child is comprehending the material that is being taught	1 (4.0%)
The teacher provided detailed information of child's overall performance	1 (4.0%)
Child was interested in knowing his/her performance	1 (4.0%)
Need to know how child's results compare to provincial results	1 (4.0%)
Eliminate PATs/employ more teachers	1 (4.0%)
Child's PAT results have not changed over time	1 (4.0%)
Need to understand what the provincial average was for the previous year	1 (4.0%)
Liked the visual displays (e.g. graphs)	1 (4.0%)
Child performed very well on their PATs	1 (4.0%)
Potential for variance in scores/results	1 (4.0%)
PATs administered at the grade 3 & 6 levels add no value to child's achievement	1 (4.0%)

n = 25

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 2
Respondents who stated that the reporting of the preliminary PAT results assisted them in understanding their child's achievement, but identified other issues or problems

Response	n (%)
Children with learning difficulties should not be required to write the PATs	1 (33.3%)
Areas of weakness/concern are not identified	1 (33.3%)
The school did not provide enough information about the nature of PATs	1 (33.3%)

n = 3

1.2 Did reporting of the preliminary results assist or add value to your child's understanding of his or her achievement?

Most parents (70%) believed that reporting of the preliminary results helped their child to understand his/her own level of achievement, while roughly 30% of parents did not support this view.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	64	70.3
No	27	29.7

n = 91

For those parents who provided commentary as to whether the preliminary results assisted their child in being able to understand his or her level of achievement, the majority of parents (34%) believed that their child was interested in knowing his or her PAT results. Five respondents (16%) thought that their child liked to receive immediate feedback about their performance; however another five respondents said that PATs put added stress on the child. Please see Table 3 for a complete breakdown of all responses.

Table 3
Respondents' feedback as to whether reporting of the preliminary results assisted or added value to their child's understanding of his or her achievement

Response	n (%)
Child was interested in knowing his/her performance	11 (34.4%)
Child liked to receive immediate feedback	5 (15.6%)
PATs put added stress on child	5 (15.6%)
Results did not matter to child	2 (6.3%)
PAT results do not align with child's report card	2 (6.3%)
Child did not gain any new information	2 (6.3%)
Did not receive results	1 (3.1%)
The teacher already kept parents informed of child's achievement level	1 (3.1%)
Unsure if results assisted/added value to child	1 (3.1%)
Not enough information was included with the child's results	1 (3.1%)
Parent was already aware of their child's achievement level	1 (3.1%)

n = 32

1.3 What would be the best method of providing your child's preliminary PAT results to you?

The majority of parents (67%) said that the best method of providing preliminary results to them would be to send the results home with their child's report card, while 16% of parents believed that the preliminary PAT results should be included on the child's report card. All responses are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4
Respondents' suggestions for best methods of providing preliminary results to parents

Response	n (%)
Send home with child's report card	63 (67.0%)
Include on child's report card	15 (16.0%)
Include on and with report card	4 (4.3%)
Send home with report card and other	2 (2.1%)
Include on report card and other	1 (1.1%)
Include on and with report card and other	1 (1.1%)
Other comments	7 (7.4%)

n=93

Note: number adds up to more than 91 due to multiple responses

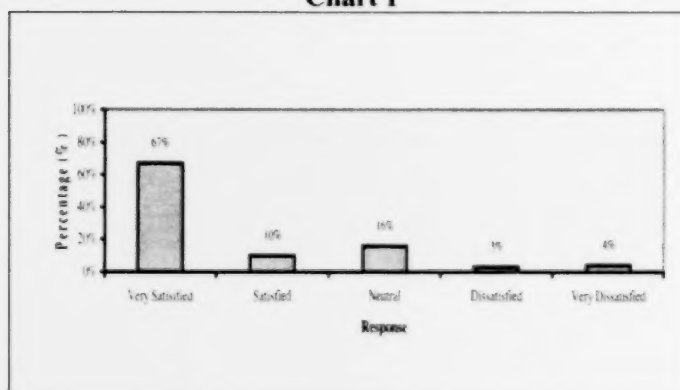
1.4 How satisfied were you with receiving your child's preliminary PAT results in June?

Most parents (76%) were either very satisfied/satisfied with receiving their child's preliminary PAT results in June. Only approximately 8% were either very dissatisfied/dissatisfied with receiving these results in June. Sixteen percent of parents remained neutral about this issue.

Response	n (%)
Very Satisfied	62 (66.7%)
Satisfied	9 (9.7%)
Neutral	15 (16.1%)
Dissatisfied	3 (3.2%)
Very Dissatisfied	4 (4.3%)

n=93

Chart 1



For those parents who provided additional commentary regarding their satisfaction level of receiving their child's preliminary PAT results in June, the majority (39%) appreciated receiving the results in a timely manner. An additional three respondents (13%) were interested in knowing how their child performed on their PATs, while another three respondents stated they had not received the results.

Two parents said that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'neutral' about receiving their child's preliminary PAT results in June, but one parent thought that PAT results should be kept separate from students' final marks and the other parent was of the opinion that PATs should be written in early June.

Table 5
Respondents' feedback as to how satisfied they were with receiving their child's preliminary PAT results in June

Response	n (%)
Appreciated receiving the results in a timely manner	9 (39.1%)
Interested in knowing how their child performed on the PATs	3 (13.0%)
Did not receive results	3 (13.0%)
Could compare PAT results with report card marks	2 (8.7%)
The PAT result was not clearly specified	2 (8.7%)
The PATs should be written in early June	1 (4.3%)
Did not receive PAT results in a timely manner	1 (4.3%)
The information presented was easy to comprehend	1 (4.3%)
Received excellent feedback from teachers	1 (4.3%)

n = 23

1.5 Were you aware that the preliminary marks could vary from the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education in the fall?

Most parents (59%) were aware that their child's preliminary marks could vary from the official marks provided by Alberta Education in the fall.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	58.5
No	39	41.5

n=94

1.6 What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of receiving your child's locally scored PAT marks in June?

For those parents who provided commentary on the advantages associated with receiving their child's locally scored PAT marks in June, the most common response identified (42%) was that the process allows for the delivery of timely results. The second most frequent response (17%) was that receiving their child's PAT marks in June allows for immediate feedback and discussion of results. Eight parents (12%) stated that it provides a better understanding of their child's overall performance, while approximately 9% of parents thought that students could use the summer months to upgrade their skills.

On the contrary, the most common disadvantage (46%) identified by parents was the potential for variance/inconsistency of results. Seven parents (21%) thought that PATs can cause added stress.

In addition to the specific comments related to the advantages and disadvantages of receiving their child's PAT marks in June, a total of seven respondents stated that there were no disadvantages associated with this process, while one parent said there was no advantage, and only one parent was not sure if there were any advantages or disadvantages. Please refer to the tables below for a complete review of all responses provided.

Table 6
Respondents' comments on the advantages in receiving their child's locally scored PAT marks in June

Response	n (%)
Timely results	29 (42.0%)
Allows for immediate feedback/discussion of results	12 (17.4%)
Provides a better understanding of child's overall performance	8 (11.6%)
Students could use the summer months to upgrade their skills	6 (8.7%)
Can determine where improvements/adjustments are needed	5 (7.2%)
Students can evaluate their own performance	4 (5.8%)
Assists in preparing for next school year	4 (5.8%)
Provides a better understanding of performance in relation to provincial standards/results	3 (4.3%)
Good information to know	1 (1.4%)
The process has increased child's confidence level	1 (1.4%)
Child was interested in knowing his/her performance	1 (1.4%)
Few advantages	1 (1.4%)

n = 69

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 7
Respondents' comments on the disadvantages in receiving their child's locally scored PAT marks in June

Response	n (%)
Potential for variance/inconsistency of results	15 (45.5%)
PATs can cause added stress	7 (21.2%)
May provide a false impression of child's overall performance	2 (6.1%)
No time for improvements to be made in current school year	2 (6.1%)
PATs are a waste of time/resources	2 (6.1%)
The PATs should be written during the beginning of June	1 (3.0%)
The month of June is a busy time of year for students	1 (3.0%)
Potentially less time for students to prepare for PATs	1 (3.0%)
Child's results are compared to a standard	1 (3.0%)
More confident in teacher's overall evaluation of child's performance	1 (3.0%)

n = 33

1.7 Are you in favour of receiving the preliminary results of your child's Grade 6 or 9 PATs in June?

Most parents surveyed (86%) were in favour of receiving the preliminary results of their child's grade 6 or grade 9 PATs in June.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	79	85.9
No	13	14.1

n=92

1.8 Would you like to see Alberta Education expand the preliminary reporting of Grade 6/9 PATs project to all schools?

The majority of parents (85%) said they would like to see Alberta Education expand the preliminary reporting of grade 6/9 PATs to all schools.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	72	84.7
No	13	15.3

n=85

1.9 Additional Comments

Parents were not asked to provide additional comments; however a number of respondents took the opportunity to provide further commentary.

Table 8
Respondents' additional comments

Focus attention toward other student-related issues
Instead of the government spending money on senseless surveys like this, I'd like to see more help for those students who are not mentally disabled or have behavioural problems, but just need a bit more help & assistance with their core subjects. There are lots of students who do not get or have help at home.
Comments related to Provincial Achievement Testing
At this time I would like to comment on the questions on the PAT exams on Language Arts especially but also Social Studies. LA: very weird stories, does not make sense, uses very similar character names that only confuse. Some students chose to just randomly check answer and ignore story. This type of testing will not result in any fair or accurate knowledge of students. Please reconsider content for stories. Social: Irrelevant questions, more like a Language Arts assignment. The questions should be about social studies content that has been learned in school. And something relevant. Please consider, though too late for my child.
I am under the understanding that PAT's are for making sure that kids don't "fall through the cracks" in their education. It seems, however, that it is a competition between schools as to whom can achieve the greater scores. The curriculum seems to be jammed into 8 months so that the month can be review and practice PAT's. Personally, my own child was all "worked up" over these exams. I feel that less emphasis should be put on the PAT's so that teachers can teach without the extra pressure of making sure their class score well.
I have read the practice exam for all subject areas. I feel that these exams are testing mostly reading and comprehension. Perhaps the questions for Social especially should be more carefully selected to that they test curriculum as well.

1.10 Discussion of significant relationships between responses provided by parents

The following three tables show the significant relationships between cross-tabulated variables for some key parent responses. In Table 9, the majority of parents (70.3%) were in favour of receiving preliminary PAT results in June and also felt that receiving the results added value to their understanding of their child's achievement. In Table 10, the majority of parents (73.8%) stated they would like to see the pilot expanded to all schools and they thought that receiving the results added value to their understanding of their child's achievement. In Table 11, the majority of parents (79.5%) stated that they would like to see the pilot expanded to all schools and that they were in favour of receiving their child's results in June.

Table 9

In favour of receiving the results in June				
Add value to your understanding of your child's achievement		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	64 (70.3%)	4 (4.4%)	68 (74.7%)
	No	14 (15.4%)	9 (9.9%)	23 (25.3%)
	Total	78 (85.7%)	13 (14.3%)	91 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < 0.01$. Chi-square = 15.51

Table 10

Would you like to see the pilot expanded to all schools				
Add value to your understanding of your child's achievement		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	62 (73.8%)	3 (3.6%)	65 (77.4%)
	No	10 (11.9%)	9 (10.7%)	19 (22.6%)
	Total	72 (85.7%)	12 (14.3%)	84 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < 0.01$. Chi-square = 21.95

Table 11

Would you like to see the pilot expanded to all schools				
In favour of receiving the results in June		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	66 (79.5%)	4 (4.8%)	70 (84.3%)
	No	4 (4.8%)	9 (10.8%)	13 (15.7%)
	Total	70 (84.3%)	13 (15.6%)	83 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < 0.01$. Chi-square = 33.49

SECTION 2: SURVEY OF TEACHERS WHOSE SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PILOT PROJECT

Overall 75 teacher surveys were returned. Thirteen of the 75 surveys were a result of the schools photocopying the surveys and distributing them to other teachers to complete. These surveys were included in the study as they did not make any significant differences to the statistics and they also increased the number of surveys returned.

2.1 Did marking students' PATs in June cause you any challenges?

Approximately 85% of teachers indicated that marking the students' PATs did not cause them any challenges.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	14.7
No	64	85.3

n=75

For those who reported that the marking caused challenges, the most common challenge identified was that of time (45%), other respondents indicated that the answer key template did not fit or was not convenient to use (36%). Another three respondents indicated that the written portion of the Language Arts test caused them problems (27%).

Table 12
Challenges caused by marking students' PATs in June

Response	n (%)
Time	5 (45.4%)
Answer key didn't fit/not convenient to use	4 (36.4%)
Written part of LA test caused problems	3 (27.3%)

n=11

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Most respondents indicated that marking students' PATs in June had caused no challenges. The majority of those respondents indicated that there were no problems (63%); one respondent reported that marking of the PATs was beneficial to teachers and five respondents indicated that the answer keys fit correctly (31%).

Table 13
No challenges caused by marking students' PATs in June

Response	n (%)
No problems	10 (62.5%)
Answer keys fit	5 (31.3%)
Marking is beneficial to teachers	1 (6.3%)

n=16

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to the effect of rounding

2.2 Did you use the reporting template provided by Alberta Education?

Sixty-four percent (64%) of teachers responding to this question stated that the reporting template provided by Alberta Education had been used for locally marking the PATs. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents stated they had not used the template.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	64.4
No	26	35.6

n=73

2.3 Do you have any suggestions for its improvement?

Of those who had used the template for locally marking the PATs, they were then asked to provide any suggestions for improvement to the template. Overall, responses were broken down according to whether respondents provided suggestions for improving the reporting template or for improving the scoring template. A separate table lists responses for teachers' suggestions for improving the template, but the type of template could not be confirmed from analyzing the responses that were provided.

Table 14
Suggestions for improvement to the reporting template

Response	n (%)
Include spaces for written LA and Math Part A	1 (20.0%)
Letter was a bit wordy for some parents	1 (20.0%)
Allow arrows so grades can be entered going down or across	1 (20.0%)
Difficult to exit once reports are selected	1 (20.0%)
The addition of G (good): NI, S, G, VG, E	1 (20.0%)
A print function to print PDF's	1 (20.0%)

n=5

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Table 15
Suggestions for improvement to the scoring template

Response	n (%)
Answer sheet didn't fit properly	3 (50.0%)
Specific suggestions*	1 (16.7%)
Easy to use	1 (16.7%)
Answer sheet fit	1 (16.7%)

n=6

Table 16
Suggestions for improvement to the templates, type of template could not be confirmed

Response	n (%)
Very user friendly	2 (50.0%)
Should list all students at once instead of 10 at a time	1 (25.0%)
Not applicable	1 (25.0%)

n=4

*Some specific suggestions made were to:

- have a print function in order to print individual PDF's for inclusion in report cards
- list all students instead of ten at a time
- enlarge the bubbles
- add 'G' (good): NI, S, G, VG, E

2.4 Have you marked the multiple choice portions of the students' PATs in the past?

Most teachers (77%) indicated that they had marked the multiple choice portions of the students' PATs in the past. Seventeen teachers (23%) indicated that they had not locally marked students' PATs in the past. The responses are displayed in Chart 1.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	77.3
No	17	22.7

n=75

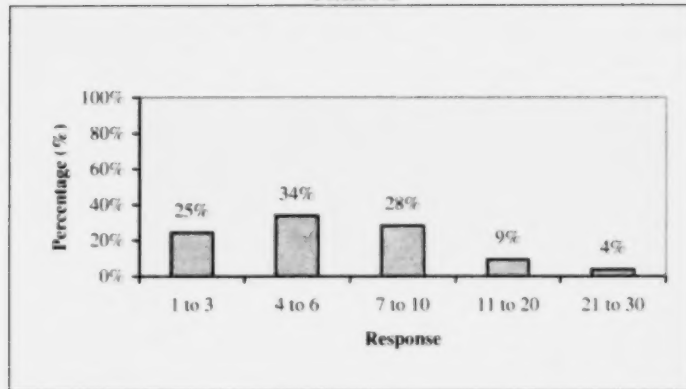
2.4b If yes, for approximately how many years?

Of those who indicated that they had been marking the multiple choice portions of the PATs in the past, most respondents reported having done this for the past 4-6 years (34%). The majority of respondents indicated that they have been locally marking students' PATs for 4 to 10 years. The results are illustrated in Chart 2.

Response	Frequency	Percent
1-3	13	24.5%
4-6	18	33.9%
7-10	15	28.3%
11-20	5	9.4%
21-30	2	3.8%

n=53

Chart 2



2.5 Do you use students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark?

The majority of respondents (81%) reported using students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark. Fourteen respondents (19%) indicated that they did not use students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	81.1
No	14	18.9

n=74

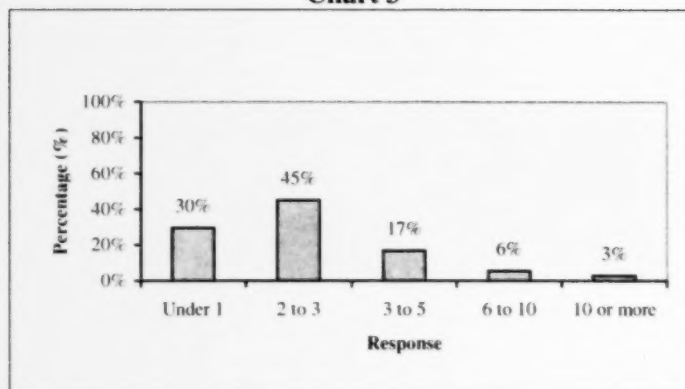
2.6 Approximately how many minutes per student did it take you to mark the multiple choice portions of your students' PATs?

Respondents were asked how many minutes it had taken to mark the multiple choice portions of the students' PATs. Most respondents indicated that it had taken between 2 to 3 minutes per student to mark their PATs (45%). The majority of respondents reported that it took less than five minutes per student to mark the PATs. Chart 3 illustrates the responses.

Response	n (%)
Under 1 minute	21 (29.6%)
2 or 3 minutes	32 (45.1%)
3 to 5 minutes	12 (16.9%)
6 to 10 minutes	4 (5.6%)
10 or more minutes	2 (2.8%)

n=71

Chart 3



2.7 Did having the locally scored PAT data available enhance your understanding of your students' achievement?

Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents agreed that having the locally scored PAT data available enhanced their understanding of their students' achievement. Twenty-five percent (25%) indicated that having this data did not enhance their understanding of the students' achievement. Respondents were given room to provide their comments. The comments are organized into groups, those who felt it enhanced their understanding and those who felt it did not. The responses are listed below in Table 17 and in Table 18.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	75.3
No	18	24.7

n=73

Table 17
Enhanced understanding of students' achievement

Response	n (%)
Use results to improve teaching	9 (45.0%)
Provided immediate feedback	8 (40.0%)
Able to use as a needs assessment	4 (20.0%)
Able to discuss results with students	1 (5.0%)
Use results as a final mark	1 (5.0%)

n=20

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Table 18
Did not enhance understanding of students' achievement

Response	n (%)
PAT is only a snapshot	7 (63.6%)
No time at end of year to examine/reflect on PAT	2 (18.2%)
Results showed no surprises	1 (9.1%)
PAT is geared towards a certain population	1 (9.1%)

n=11

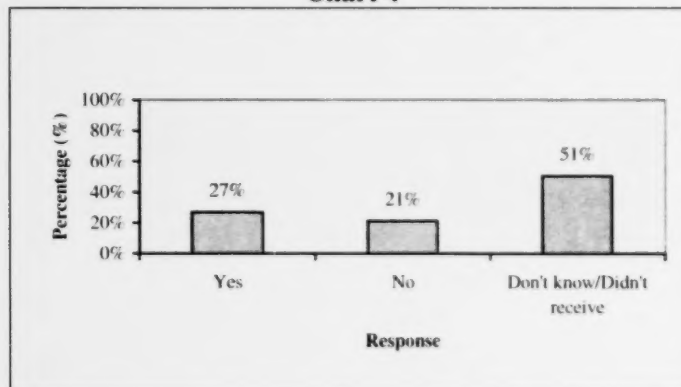
2.8 Did reporting of the PAT results assist or otherwise add value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement?

Many respondents (51%) had not received any feedback from students as results were sent out on the last day of school. Of those who had received some feedback, 27% indicated that reporting of the PAT results had added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement. Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated that reporting of the PAT results had not added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement. The responses are illustrated in the chart below.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	27.0
No	16	21.3
Don't know/Did not receive feedback	38	50.7

n=74

Chart 4



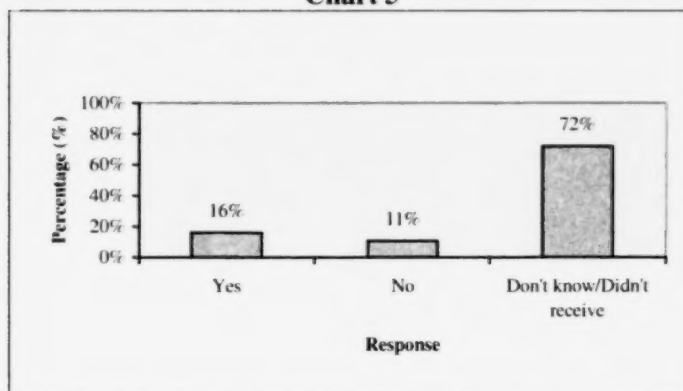
2.9 Did reporting of the PAT results assist or otherwise add value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement?

When asked whether or not reporting of the PAT results assisted or added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement, 72% of respondents had not received any feedback. Of those who had received feedback, 16% indicated that reporting the PAT results had added value and 11% indicated that it had not added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement. The responses are illustrated in the following chart.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	16.0
No	8	10.7
Don't know/Did not receive feedback	54	72.0

n=74

Chart 5



2.10 Did any issues or matters of misunderstanding with students and/or parents arise?

The majority of respondents indicated that there had been no issues or matters of misunderstanding with parents or students (76%). Respondents were given room to enter comments if they so desired, the comments are listed in the tables below.

Response	Frequency	Percent
No	57	76.0%
No response	13	17.3%
With students	4	5.3 %
With parents	2	2.7%

n=75

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Of those who did receive feedback from students, two respondents indicated that there was too much pressure or stress surrounding the PATs.

Table 19
Students

Response	n (%)
No issues	4 (50.0%)
Concerned, more pressure/stress surrounding PATs	2 (25.0%)
Lack of motivation to write test	1 (12.5%)
Students felt discouraged	1 (12.5%)

n=8

Four respondents (44%) who had received feedback from parents reported that parents viewed the PAT marks as being equal to report card marks.

Table 20
Parents

Response	n (%)
Parents see PAT marks as equal to report card marks, not the case	4 (44.4%)
No issues	3 (33.3%)
Concerned PATs are students' final grade	2 (22.2%)
Concept of "raw score", concern that marks may change	1 (11.1%)

n=9

Most respondents (60%) commented that PAT results were distributed too late in the year to receive any feedback. Marks had been sent out on the last day of school which meant that teachers did not receive much feedback from students or parents.

Table 21
Other

Response	n (%)
Marks went out last day of school, too soon to know if there are issues	6 (60.0%)
Don't know	2 (20.0%)
No issues	2 (20.0%)

n=10

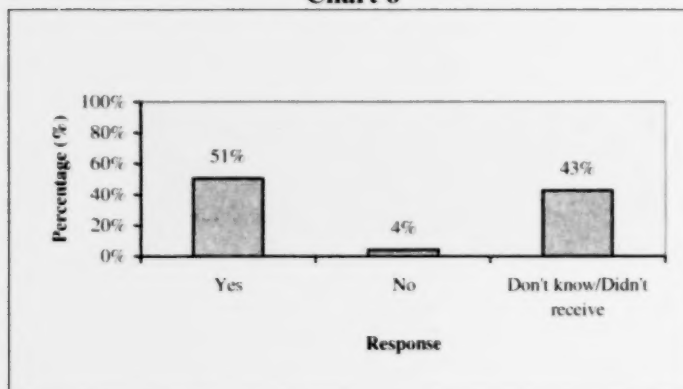
2.11 Would you say students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June?

As the table and chart indicate below, approximately 51% of teachers felt that students and parents appreciated receiving locally scored PAT results in June. Forty-three percent (43%) of teachers who responded to this question reported not having heard any feedback from parents or students. The responses are illustrated in Chart 6 below.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	50.7
No	3	4.2
Don't know/Did not receive feedback	32	42.7

n=71

Chart 6



Teachers who had received feedback from students indicated that students were curious to know their results (74%) and that the feedback was appreciated (16%). The responses are listed below in Tables 22 and 23.

Table 22
Students were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June

Response	n (%)
Students are curious for results	14 (73.7%)
Feedback is appreciated	3 (15.8%)
Results were on reports cards	1 (5.3%)
Still don't agree with PAT	1 (5.3%)

n=19

A few respondents stated that the parents and students do not receive their PAT marks until the last day of school and therefore they cannot evaluate students' satisfaction. One respondent reported that they did not give out the results following the marking.

Table 23

Students were not appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June

Response	n (%)
There is no time to meet in June	1 (33.3%)
Results impact students' feelings	1 (33.3%)
Not an accurate representation of the years' work	1 (33.3%)

n=3

2.12 What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June?

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on the advantages and disadvantages to providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June. The most common advantage (63%) was that providing the PAT marks in June provided immediate feedback to students. It was also stated that knowing the PAT marks in June can help parents and students make appropriate choices for the following school year (this comment was specifically made in regard to the Grade 9 PAT). Another common response (20%) was that providing the PAT marks in June enabled the parents to help their children immediately. The responses are shown in Table 24.

Table 24

Advantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June

Response	n (%)
Immediate feedback	38 (63.3%)
Parents can deal/help students immediately	12 (20.0%)
Helps make appropriate choices for following year	11 (18.3%)
No advantages	4 (6.6%)
Have always provided PATs	1 (1.7%)
Marks validate teachers concerns	1 (1.7%)
PATs ensure assessment is equal for all Alberta students	1 (1.7%)

n=60

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

Many respondents also listed disadvantages to providing parents with the PAT marks in June. The largest number of teachers stated that providing the PAT marks in June was upsetting to parents (18%). Other disadvantages include poor timing of reporting results (11%), only knowing the mark and not the subject matter (13%) and that PATs are only a snapshot of the student's abilities (13%). The responses are listed in Table 25.

Table 25
Disadvantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June

Response	n (%)
Marks are upsetting to parents	7 (18.4%)
Importance of test is too high, lots of pressure	5 (13.1%)
Only know marks, don't know what topics to work on	5 (13.1%)
PATs are a snapshot	5 (13.1%)
No disadvantages	4 (10.5%)
Poor timing of results reporting/can't compare to Province	4 (10.5%)
PAT marking takes time	4 (10.5%)
Specific test issues	2 (5.2%)
PATs are an assessment of learning	1 (2.6%)
Combining PAT and teacher marks creates confusion	1 (2.6%)

n=38

2.13 Based on your experience, do you think that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June?

The majority of respondents (78%) stated that all schools should report preliminary PAT marks to parents in June. Twenty-two percent of respondents disagreed.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	77.9
No	15	22.1

n=68

Teachers were prompted to provide comments as to whether or not all schools should report PAT results to parents in June. Those who had responded positively indicated that parents like and need to know the results early (47%). Some respondents suggested other ways of providing the PAT results, such as in the students' agenda (16%). Two respondents also noted that the process allows teachers and students to prepare themselves for the following year. The comments are listed below in Table 26.

Table 26
All schools should report preliminary PAT results to Parents in June

Response	n (%)
Parents need/like to know results early	9 (47.4%)
Yes, but could be reported in ways other than report cards	3 (15.8%)
It is beneficial to teachers/it's a good idea	2 (10.5%)
Yes, we use as part of the students' final mark	2 (10.5%)
Yes, but still don't support idea of PAT	1 (5.3%)
Students can prepare themselves for the following year	1 (5.3%)
Yes, for all scores to be equal	1 (5.3%)

n=19

For those respondents who thought that schools should not provide preliminary PAT results to parents in June, the most frequent comments were that providing the marks placed too much importance on the PATs (50%), and that reporting these marks were discouraging to students (50%). The responses are listed in Table 27.

Table 27
Schools should not report preliminary PAT results to Parents in June

Response	n (%)
Too much importance placed on the PATs	4 (50.0%)
Discouraging to students	4 (50.0%)
Too close to the end of the year	2 (25.0%)
Parent's don't value PAT results as much as report cards	2 (25.0%)
Should not report marks if teachers don't use as part of their marks	2 (25.0%)

n=8

Note: percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

2.14 Additional Responses

Although there was not a specific question asking for respondents' general comments, many teachers took the opportunity to write their comments at the end of the survey. Some respondents thanked Alberta Education for allowing them the opportunity to fill out a survey asking for their input. One respondent suggested purchasing a machine scorer which would allow teachers to very quickly mark the PATs without using a template. One respondent would have liked to have had parents from their school chosen to fill out a survey. Many respondents had specific concerns related to the PATs themselves and one respondent stated that June was a bad time of year for surveys.

2.15 Discussion of significant relationships between responses provided by teachers

The following three tables show the significant relationships between the cross-tabulated variables and the teacher responses. In Table 28, the majority of teachers (65.3%) used their students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark and also thought that it enhanced their understanding of their students' level of achievement. In Table 29, the majority of teachers (67.6%) used their students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark and also reported locally marking PATs in the past. In Table 30, the majority of teachers (83.3%) said that they thought students and parents were appreciative about receiving PAT results in June and would also like to see the pilot expanded to all schools.

Table 28

		Enhance your understanding of your students' achievement		
Use students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	47 (65.3%)	12 (16.7%)	59 (81.9%)
	No	7 (9.7%)	6 (8.3%)	13 (18.1%)
	Total	54 (75.0%)	18 (25.0%)	72 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p = .05$. Chi-square = 3.79

Table 29

		Have you locally marked the PATs in the past		
Use students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	50 (67.6%)	10 (13.5%)	60 (81.1%)
	No	8 (10.8%)	6 (8.1%)	14 (18.9%)
	Total	58 (78.4%)	16 (21.6%)	74 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < .05$. Chi-square = 4.60

Table 30

		Should all schools report preliminary PAT results in June		
Students and parents were appreciative about receiving PAT results in June		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	30 (83.3%)	4 (11.1%)	34 (94.4%)
	No	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)	2 (5.6%)
	Total	30 (83.3%)	6 (16.7%)	36 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < .01$. Chi-square = 10.59

SECTION 3: SURVEY OF PILOT SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

In all, a total of 102 surveys were sent to pilot school principals. Seventy-five surveys were returned, resulting in a completion rate of 73.5%.

What grade(s) in your school is/are involved in the pilot project?

Of those schools participating in the pilot project, a total of 37 schools (49%) were identified as participating at the grade 6 level, 29 schools (39%) at the grade 9 level, and 9 schools (12%) offered both grade 6 and grade 9. The breakdown per grade level is detailed in the table below.

Survey completions by grade level		
Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
Grade 6	37	49.3
Grade 9	29	38.7
Grade 6 & 9	9	12.0

n=75

3.1 How was your school selected as a pilot school?

Respondents were asked how their school was selected to be a pilot school. The most common response (55%) was that schools were asked by the jurisdiction or superintendent to participate. Twenty-one respondents (28%) volunteered their schools when the jurisdiction asked for participants and ten (13%) were selected by the jurisdiction/district office. The selection systems for pilot schools are outlined in Table 31 below.

Table 31
Methods by which respondents' schools were selected to be part of the pilot project

Response	n (%)
School asked by central office to participate	41 (54.7%)
School volunteered to participate	21 (28.0%)
School selected by central office	10 (13.3%)
Part of the pilot last year	2 (2.7%)
Always selected for surveys	1 (1.3%)

n=75

3.2 Did local marking cause any challenges for your school staff?

When asked whether or not local marking caused any challenges for their school staff, most respondents (77%) indicated that it had not.

Response	n (%)
Caused challenges	17 (23%)
Did not cause challenges	58 (77%)

n=75

Of those principals who further elaborated that the local marking had caused challenges for their school staff, eight respondents (47%) said that the process put time constraints on their staff to complete this task. Two respondents said they needed to hire additional teachers (e.g. substitute teachers) to serve as replacements for those teachers who were assigned to mark the PATs, while another two respondents noted that they had to make some modifications to reporting students' results.

A large majority of those respondents who stated that the local marking did not cause any challenges for their school staff, the most common response (83%) was that it is already a routine process for their staff members.

Refer to Table 32 and Table 33 for a review of all responses from those principals who indicated why the local marking caused challenges or did not cause any challenges for their staff.

A total of three respondents noted that the local marking had not caused any challenges for their staff, but went on to elaborate about other issues or problems (see Table 34).

Table 32
Respondents' feedback as to why the local marking caused challenges for their school staff

Response	n (%)
Time Constraints	8 (47.1%)
Needed to hire additional teachers	2 (11.8%)
Had to make modifications for reporting results	2 (11.8%)
Did not like scoring template	2 (11.8%)
Other comments:	
• Greater awareness of the types of questions asked on these exams	
• Staff using PAT mark differently than colleagues in other schools	2 (5.9%)
Puts additional stressors on teachers/schools	1 (5.9%)
Process disruptive to students	1 (5.9%)
Some teachers did not want to include PAT results with report cards	1 (5.9%)

n= 17

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 33
Respondents' feedback as to why the local marking did not cause challenges for their school staff

Response	n (%)
Routine process	19 (82.6%)
Liked scoring template	1 (4.3%)
Good learning experience for teachers	1 (4.3%)
Did not need to hire additional teachers	1 (4.3%)
Easy marking process	1 (4.3%)
Other comment:	
• No, we chose not to use them at our school level	1 (4.3%)

n = 23

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 34
Respondents who stated that the local marking did not cause any challenges for their school staff, but identified other issues or problems

Response	n
Teachers did not want PAT marks included with report cards	1
Did not like scoring template	1
Additional time had to be spent inputting the data	1

3.3 Has your school locally marked PATs in the past?

Only one respondent reported that they had not locally marked PATs in the past.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	74	98.7
No	1	1.3

n=75

3.3b If yes, for how many years?

The majority of respondents (43%) said that they had been locally marking PATs for five to nine years.

Response	Frequency	Percent
1-4	11	25.0
5-9	19	43.2
10+	14	31.8

n=44

Of the respondents who did not give a numerical answer, twelve stated that they had been locally marking PATs for as long as they could remember. Six were unsure as to how many years they had been marking, four said they had been locally marking for many years and one reported that marking the PATs was decided by the teacher.

3.4 Have locally scored PATs been used as a percentage of students' final marks in the past?

The majority of respondents (95%) stated that the locally scored PATs have been used as a percentage of students' final marks in the past.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	94.5
No	4	5.5

n=73

3.5 Did you use the reporting template provided by Alberta Education?

The majority of principals (62%) indicated they had used the reporting template provided by Alberta Education, while roughly 38% of respondents said that they had not made use of this template.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	62.2
No	28	37.8

n=74

3.6 Do you have any suggestions for improving the Learner Assessment Branch template?

Over half (55%) of respondents who used the template provided by Alberta Education to report PAT marks to parents did not offer suggestions for its improvement or thought that the template was user-friendly.

However, the most frequent suggestion (28%) was to resolve some of the technical problems associated with the LAB template. These problems included:

- Data entry problems (4)
- Problems in working with the Extranet (3)

- Printing individual students results was time consuming (2)

The second most frequent suggestion (16%) for improving the template was to clarify or add additional pieces of information within the template itself. For instance, two respondents did not know whether it was raw scores or percentages that were entered into the template. Two respondents made suggestions for the scoring template. The first suggestion was to translate the scoring template into French and the second suggestion was to revise the scoring template and computerize the template.

Table 35
Respondents' suggestions for improving the reporting template provided by Alberta Education

Response	n (%)
Template is user-friendly	18 (56.3%)
Resolve the technical problems	9 (28.1%)
Pieces of information need to be clarified/added within the template	5 (15.6%)
Be able to import data into an Excel file/eliminate data entry requirement	1 (3.1%)

n= 32

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

3.7 What method did you use to deliver the PAT results to parents?

Most principals (62%) indicated that students' preliminary PAT results were sent home with the child's report card, while 42% of respondents revealed that the results were included on the child's report card. Of those respondents who reported delivering the PAT results to parents in an 'other' method, one reported averaging the PAT result into the students' final mark. Another reported sending the marks home in a letter and the third respondent did not send the marks home with the child.

Response	n (%)
Marks sent home with child's report card	45 (61.6%)
Marks included on child's report card	31 (42.4%)
Other comments	3 (4.1%)

n=73

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses

3.8 Did having the locally scored PAT data available enhance teachers' understanding of their students' achievement?

Most principals (73%) indicated that having the locally scores PAT data served to enhance teachers' understanding of their students' achievement.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	52	73.2
No	19	26.8

n=71

The following table details the various responses that principals gave when asked if having the locally scored PAT data enhanced teachers' understanding of their students' achievement. The most common response (39%) that was provided in both a positive and a negative light was that teachers already understand their students' achievement levels and that no new knowledge was acquired from the process. The next most frequent responses (21%) were that PATs serve as a good/valuable indicator of student achievement, and that the process allows for immediate feedback of results. Please refer to Table 36 for a complete review of all responses.

Table 36
Respondents' opinions on whether having the locally scored PAT data enhanced teachers' understanding of their students' achievement

Response	n (%)
Teachers already understand their students' achievement levels/no new knowledge was acquired*	15 (38.5%)
PATs serve as a good/valuable indicator of student achievement	8 (20.5%)
The process allows for immediate feedback of results	8 (20.5%)
Assists in preparing for new school year	5 (12.8%)
Supportive of student assessment	2 (5.1%)
PATs make up just one piece of the student assessment process	2 (5.1%)
Pieces of information need to be added to the report	1 (2.6%)
Teachers can evaluate how well they have covered the curriculum	1 (2.6%)

n=39

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

*Some respondents answered this question in a positive tone and stated that the process had not changed from previous years. In contrast, some respondents answered in a negative tone and stated that the process had not changed from previous years.

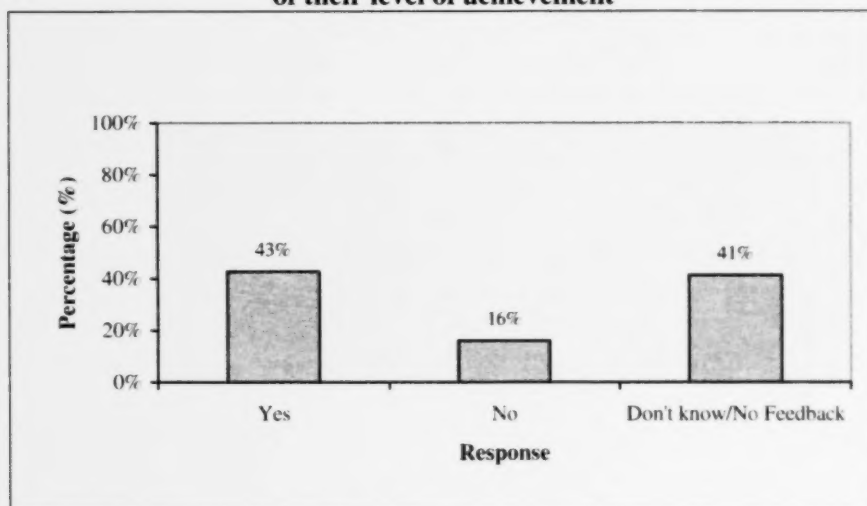
3.9 Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement?

A total of thirty-two respondents (43%) stated that reporting the PAT results by the teacher assisted students in being able to understand their level of achievement. However, roughly the same percentage of principals (41%) indicated they didn't know/didn't receive feedback as to whether this process added value to students' level of understanding of their performance. Responses are displayed in Chart 7.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	42.7
No	12	16.0
Don't Know/Did not receive feedback	31	41.3

n=75

Chart 7
Respondents' opinions as to whether or not reporting of the preliminary PAT results assisted or added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement



n=75

3.10 Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement?

The majority of principals (56%) indicated they did not know or did not receive feedback as to whether reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assisted or added value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement. Forty percent of respondents believed that this process enabled parents to understand their child's level of performance.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	40.0
No	3	4.0
Don't know/Did not receive feedback	42	56.0

n=75

3.11 Did you and/or your staff explain to the students and parents that the locally scored marks could vary with the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education in the fall?

When asked whether or not parents and students were informed that the locally scored marks could vary from the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education and the jurisdiction in September, the majority of respondents (77%) indicated that parents and students had been informed. A total of 23% of respondents said that parents and students were not informed of the potential for variance.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	77.0
No	17	23.0

n=74

3.12 Did parents or students express any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary marks and final marks or other issues?

An overwhelming percentage of principals (91%) indicated that parents or students did not express any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary marks, final marks, or other related issues.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	8.8
No	62	91.2

n=68

When asked how parents and students reacted to being informed that the preliminary marks could vary from the final marks, most respondents (25%) said they did not hear any feedback, while the same percentage said that it was too early to tell if students or parents had any reaction to the potential for variance. Three respondents (15%) indicated that parents and students questioned why the results would vary. Refer to the table below for a complete review of all responses.

Table 37
Respondents' feedback from parents and students expressed any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary results, final marks, or other issues

Response	n (%)
No feedback was received	5 (25.0%)
Too soon to tell	5 (25.0%)
Some parents/students questioned why results would vary	3 (15.0%)
Some parents/students did not see the value in reporting preliminary results	2 (10.0%)
Some parents/students wanted additional clarification	2 (10.0%)
Parents have no time to offer their opinion on this matter	1 (5.0%)
Expects concerns to be raised	1 (5.0%)
Some parents/students wanted marking to be repeated so as to ensure accurate results	1 (5.0%)

n=20

3.13 Would you say students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June?

Approximately 54% of respondents stated that students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June, while 43% did not know or did not receive feedback from students or parents.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	40	54.1
No	2	2.7
Don't know/Did not receive feedback	32	43.2

n=74

The majority of respondents (75%) who provided additional commentary indicated they felt that students and/or parents were appreciative about receiving immediate feedback about the students' PAT results in June. Three principals could not offer an opinion because they did not receive any feedback from students or parents. One respondent thought that students and/or parents would want to know only the final results in order to avoid confusion.

Table 38

Respondents' feedback as to whether students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June

Response	n (%)
Student and/or parents were appreciative about receiving immediate feedback	12 (75.0%)
No feedback was received	3 (18.8%)
Students and/or parents wanted to know just the final results	1 (6.3%)

n=16

3.14 Do you have any recommendations for Alberta Education regarding how best to communicate to parents the preliminary results of their child's PATs?

When principals were asked if they had any recommendations for Alberta Education regarding how best to communicate to parents the preliminary results of their child's PAT results, the majority (19%) stated they had no recommendations to provide. Seventeen percent of respondents questioned the usefulness/overall purpose of releasing preliminary PAT results, while the same percentage of respondents suggested that a student's PAT results should be included on their report card. Four principals suggested that the traditional method of releasing students' PAT results in the fall should be followed. All responses are detailed in the following table.

Table 39
Respondents' recommendations for Alberta Education regarding how best to communicate to parents the preliminary results of their child's PATs

Response	n (%)
No recommendations	9 (19.1%)
Principals questioned the usefulness/overall purpose in providing preliminary PAT results	8 (17.0%)
Include results with child's report card	8 (17.0%)
Follow the traditional method of reporting results in the fall	4 (8.5%)
Attach the template to the child's report card	2 (4.3%)
Allow schools to decide how best to communicate results	2 (4.3%)
Approves of pilot process	2 (2.1%)
Provide more visual aids	2 (4.3%)
Mail results directly to parents	2 (4.3%)
Liked the form letter and/or template	2 (4.3%)
Allow teachers to input the data	1 (2.1%)
Little feedback was received	1 (2.1%)
Reduce/eliminate data entry time	1 (2.1%)
Report results via the teacher	1 (2.1%)
Report results in June	1 (2.1%)
Students should be able to complete their PATs on-line	1 (2.1%)
Include additional pieces of information	1 (2.1%)

n=47

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

3.15 What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June?

Among those principals who provided commentary on the advantages associated with providing locally scored PAT marks to parents in June, the most common response identified (44%) is that the process allows for immediate feedback. Fourteen respondents (26%) stated that the process allows for the delivery of timely results, while seven respondents stated that it gives parents a better understanding of their child's achievement level.

In contrast, the most common disadvantage (37%) highlighted by principals in reporting PAT marks to parents in June was the potential for variance in scores/results. A total of 10 respondents (23%) stated that the process puts additional stressors on teachers/schools. Refer to Table 40 and Table 41 for a complete review of all responses to this question.

Table 40
Respondents' comments on the advantages in providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June

Response	n (%)
Allows for immediate feedback	24 (43.6%)
Timely results	14 (25.5%)
Gives parents a better understanding of child's achievement	7 (12.7%)
Provides additional information	4 (7.3%)
Gives teachers a better understanding of child's achievement	4 (7.3%)
Demonstrates accountability and reporting	1 (1.8%)
Testing process is a good motivator for students	1 (1.8%)
Other comment: • It is an external test on the course	1 (1.8%)

n = 55

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 41
Respondents' comments on the disadvantages in providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June

Response	n (%)
Potential for variance in scores/results	16 (37.2%)
Puts additional stressors on teachers/schools	10 (23.3%)
Clarify and/or add information on the results sent home to parents	6 (14.0%)
Parents do not always fully comprehend the PAT-related information presented to them	4 (9.3%)
Adds more controversy to achievement testing	4 (9.3%)
Questions usefulness of reporting preliminary results	2 (4.7%)
Raises need for further dialogue/debate	1 (2.3%)
Stressful for parents and/or students if results are poor	1 (2.3%)
Places too much emphasis on PAT results	1 (2.3%)

n = 43

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

3.16 Based on your experience, do you think that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June?

The majority of principals (72%) thought that all schools should report PAT results to parents in June, while 28 percent did not endorse this process.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	72.1
No	19	27.9

n=68

For those respondents who supported the view that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June, the most common response (20%) was that the process used in the end should not be complicated or time consuming. Four principals (16%) were concerned that the process would ultimately be too time consuming for their staff, while three respondents believed that reporting preliminary PAT results in June would allow for immediate feedback of student performance. Refer to Table 42 for a complete review of all responses.

Table 42
Respondents' opinions as to whether all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June

Response	n (%)
The process used should not be complicated or time consuming	5 (20.0%)
Process too time consuming for staff	4 (16.0%)
Allows for immediate feedback	3 (12.0%)
Already a routine process	2 (8.0%)
Release final/confirmed results in the fall	2 (8.0%)
Decision should rest with individual schools	2 (8.0%)
PAT results should not be included in students' final marks	1 (4.0%)
PAT results are more meaningful for teachers	1 (4.0%)
PAT results should be part of the students' grade	1 (4.0%)
Provides useful information for parents	1 (4.0%)
Compensation for marking should be given to jurisdictions/schools	1 (4.0%)
Too much emphasis is placed on PAT results	1 (4.0%)
Students need to know how well they performed	1 (4.0%)
No opinion/undecided	1 (4.0%)

n=25

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 due to multiple responses.

3.17 Discussion of significant relationships between responses provided by principals

The following four tables show the significant relationships between the cross-tabulated variables and the principal responses. In Table 43, the majority of principals (59.1%) thought that reporting of the PAT results added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement and also stated that the local marking did not cause any challenges for their staff. In Table 44, the majority of principals (90.5%) thought that students and parents were appreciative about receiving the PAT results in June and also used their students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark. In Table 45, the majority of principals (62.8%) thought the PAT results enhanced teachers' understanding of their students' level of achievement and also thought that the PAT results added value to students' understanding of their own level of achievement. In Table 46, the majority of principals (76.7%) thought that reporting PAT results added value to students' understanding of their own level of achievement and thought that the PAT results added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement.

Table 43

		Reporting of PAT results added value to <u>students'</u> understanding of their level of achievement		
Did local marking cause any challenges for your staff		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	6 (13.6%)	6 (13.6%)	12 (27.3%)
	No	26 (59.1%)	6 (13.6%)	32 (72.7%)
	Total	32 (72.7%)	12 (27.2%)	44 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < .05$. Chi-square = 4.30

Table 44

		Students and parents were appreciative about receiving the PAT results in June		
Locally scored PAT results used as a percentage of the students' final mark		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	38 (90.5%)	1 (2.4%)	39 (92.9%)
	No	2 (4.8%)	1 (2.4%)	3 (7.1%)
	Total	40 (95.3%)	2 (4.8%)	42 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < .05$. Chi-square = 5.82

Table 45

		Reporting of PAT results added value to <u>students'</u> understanding of their level of achievement		
Locally scored PAT results enhanced teachers' understanding of their students' achievement		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	27 (62.8%)	6 (13.9%)	33 (76.7%)
	No	4 (9.3%)	6 (13.9%)	10 (23.3%)
	Total	31 (72.1%)	12 (27.8%)	43 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p = .01$. Chi-square = 6.67

Table 46

		Reporting of PAT results added value to <u>parents'</u> understanding of their child's level of achievement		
Reporting of PAT results added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	23 (76.7%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (76.7%)
	No	4 (13.3%)	3 (10.0%)	7 (23.3%)
	Total	27 (90.0%)	3 (10.0%)	30 (100.0%)

The relationships are significant at $p < .01$. Chi-square = 10.95

SECTION 4: COMPARING YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO OF THE PILOT PROJECT

In the first year of the 2004/2005 pilot project, interviews were completed with principals and parents. Principals were contacted and asked if they would be willing to provide the names of two randomly selected parents who participated in the Grade 6/9 Timely Reporting to Parents pilot project. This method yielded the names and phone numbers of 60 parents. In total, 47 interviews with parents and 59 interviews with principals were completed.

In Year One of the pilot project many principals and parents commented that too much time had passed between receiving the results and when the Alberta Education interview had taken place. To solve this problem, a mail-out survey was created for the second year of the pilot project. This survey was distributed in June and was requested to be returned to Alberta Education by early July.

The following charts and tables will compare Years One and Two of the pilot project.

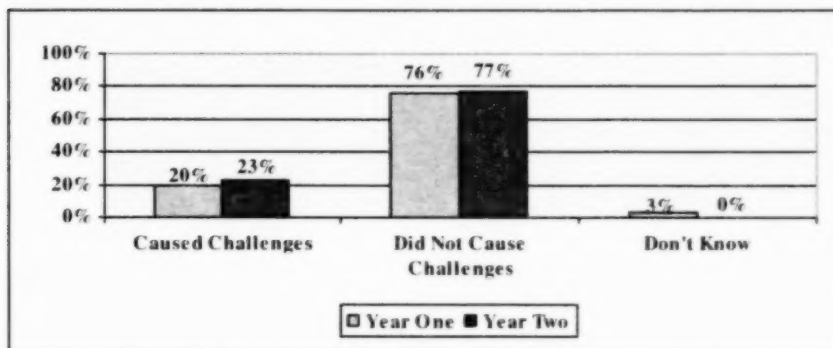
Principals

In Year One of the pilot project, a total of 59 principals were interviewed, while 75 principals were surveyed in Year Two of the project.

4.1 Did local marking cause any challenges for your school staff?

In both Years One and Two, the majority of principals (76% and 77%, respectively) indicated that locally marking the PATs did not cause any challenges for their staff.

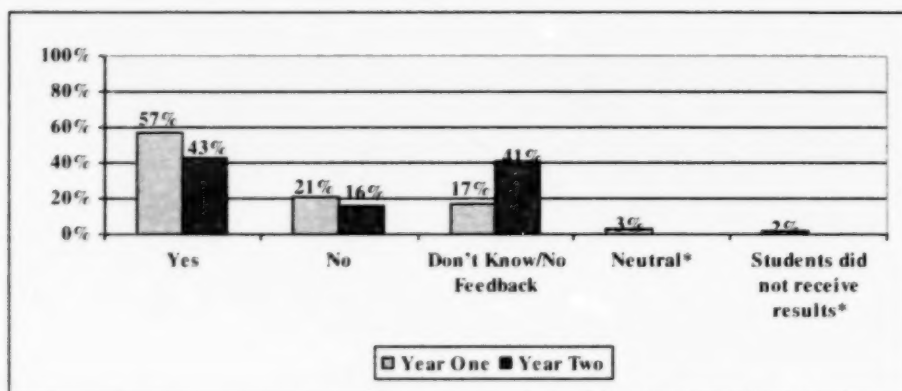
Chart 8



4.2 Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement?

The graph below shows that a large percentage of principals felt that reporting the PAT results assisted students' understanding of their level of achievement, 57% in Year One and 43% in Year Two. The higher percentage of those who did not know or did not receive feedback in Year Two (41%) is due to the timing of these two surveys. In Year One, this interview was completed in the fall; principals would have perhaps received feedback early in the year. In Year Two, this survey was asked to be completed by early July; many principals had not received feedback as of that date.

Chart 9

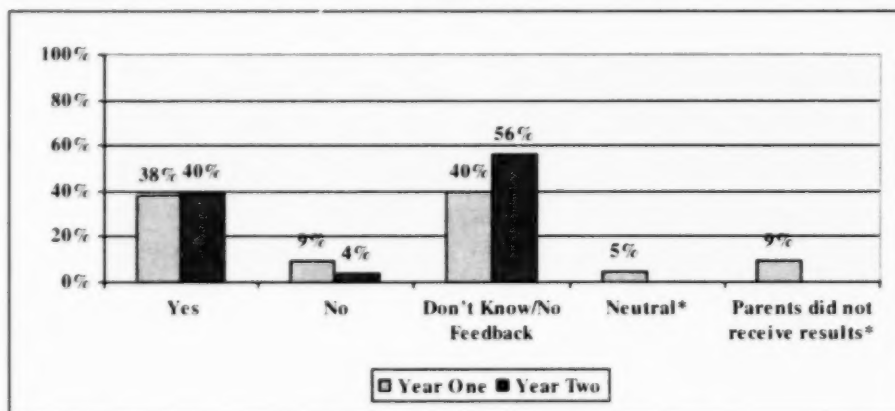


*This choice of response was only available in Year One.

4.3 Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement?

As noted in the previous question, a large percentage of respondents in Year Two had not received any feedback when the survey was being completed. Overall, in both years of the pilot, a large number of respondents felt that reporting of the PAT results added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement.

Chart 10

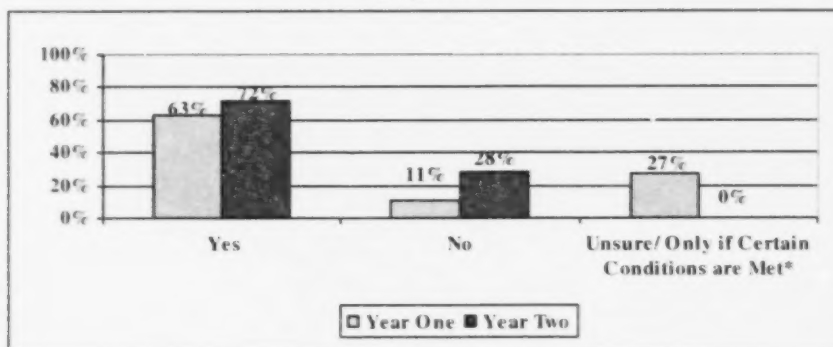


*This choice of response was only available in Year One.

4.4 Based on your experience, do you think that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to Parents in June?

When comparing Year One and Year Two results, there is an increase in the percentage of respondents who would like to see the project expanded to all schools. In the first year of the pilot project 27% of respondents indicated that they would like to see the project expanded only if certain conditions were met. In the second year of the project, that option was not a choice on the survey; respondents were asked to respond either 'yes' or 'no.' to the question.

Chart 11



* Response was only an option in Year One.

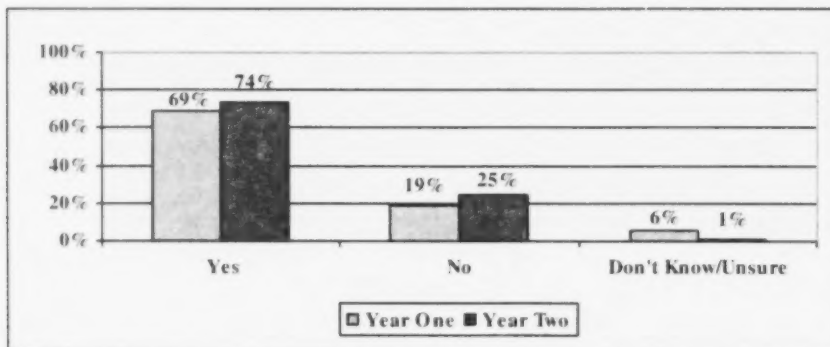
Parents

A total of 47 parents were interviewed in the first year of the pilot project. In the second year of the pilot project, 1394 surveys were sent to schools in order to be distributed to parents. A total of 91 surveys were returned to Alberta Education.

4.5 Did reporting of the preliminary PAT results assist or add value to your understanding of your child's achievement?

From Year One to Year Two, there was a 5% increase in the percentage of respondents who indicated that reporting of the preliminary PAT results added value to their understanding of their child's achievement. However, there was also a 6% increase in the number of respondents who felt that reporting did not add value to their understanding. In the first year of the pilot project, 6% of respondents were unsure, whereas only 1% of respondents reported being unsure in the second year of the pilot project.

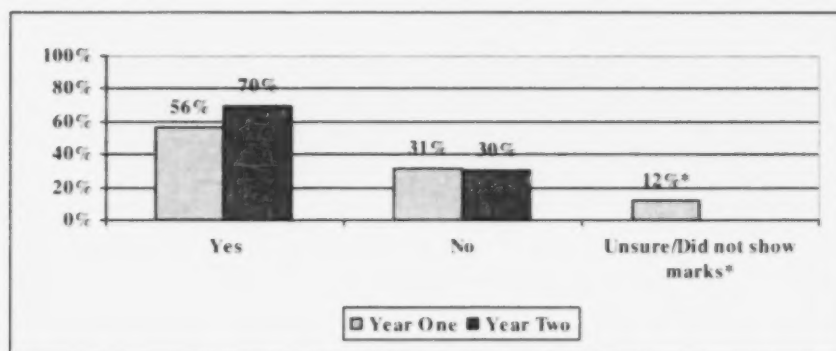
Chart 12



4.6 Did reporting of the preliminary results assist or add value to your child's understanding of his or her achievement?

When parents were asked whether or not they felt that the reporting of PAT results assisted or added value to their child's understanding of his/her achievement, the majority from both years of the pilot project indicated that this process had added value. Approximately 30% of respondents in both years indicated that reporting of the results had not added value to their child's understanding. In the first year of the pilot, respondents were given a choice of answering 'unsure' or 'don't know'. This may account for some of the increase in the number who felt that reporting PAT results in June had added value to their child's understanding of his/her achievement.

Chart 13

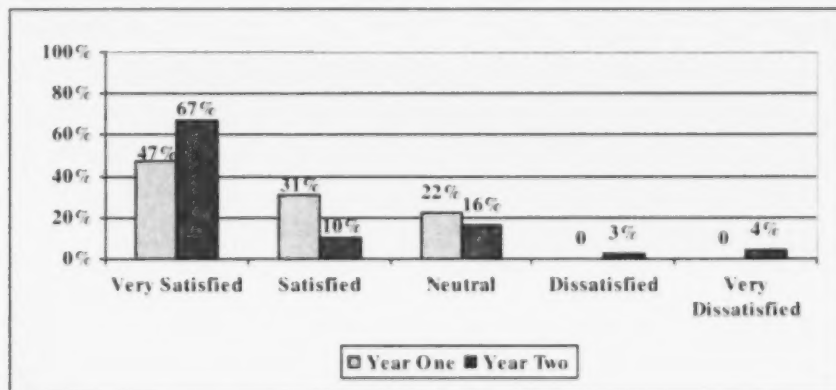


* Response was only an option in Year One

4.7 How satisfied were you with receiving your child's preliminary PAT results in June?

Parents were asked to rate their satisfaction levels with receiving the PAT results in June. In both years of the project, most respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with receiving the results in June (78% and 77%, respectively). In the first year of the pilot, no respondents reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, whereas 7% of respondents in the second year of the pilot felt this way.

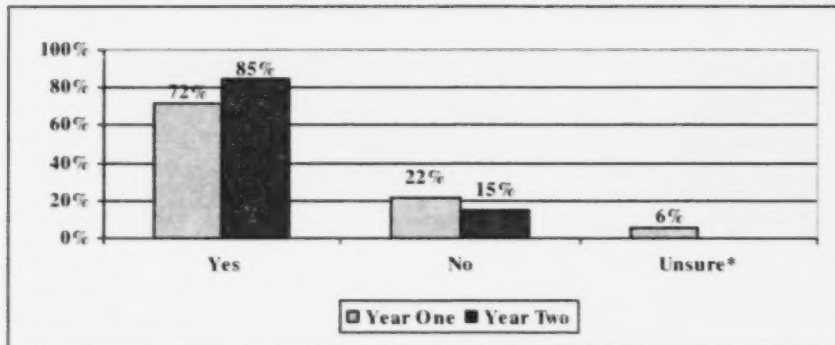
Chart 14



4.8 Would you like to see Alberta Education expand the preliminary reporting of Grade 6/9 PATs project to all schools?

The majority of parents in the second year of the pilot indicated that they would like to see Alberta Education expand the project to all schools (85%). In the first year of the pilot, 72% of parents indicated that they would like to see the project expanded.

Chart 15



* Response was only an option in Year One

SECTION 5: DISCUSSION

Survey limitations such as a small sample size mean that caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from the results. However, the survey responses do give a general idea of principals', parents' and teachers' insights on the development, success, and potential expansion of the pilot project. The following section discusses the results of the principal, parent and teacher surveys independently and also compares the three sets of responses.

Some key findings from the survey reveal that:

- the majority of all three groups of respondents felt that Alberta Education should expand the preliminary reporting of Grade 6/9 PATs to all schools (mentioned by 72% of principals, 85% of parents and 78% of teachers);
- parents were highly satisfied with receiving their child's preliminary results in June (76% of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with receiving the preliminary results);
- reporting of the preliminary PAT results assisted or added value to students' understanding of their level of achievement (mentioned by 43% of principals and 27% of teachers);
- reporting of the preliminary PAT results assisted or added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement (mentioned by 74% of parents, 40% of principals and 16% of teachers).

In the parent surveys, there were discrepancies regarding receiving the results and being informed of the potential for variance between the preliminary/locally scored marks and the final marks to be provided by Alberta Education. The latter two matters of confusion are discussed in more detail below.

5.1 Receiving the Results

There were two cases of parents indicating they had received the wrong PAT results and had not completed the survey. The surveys were returned to Alberta Education blank, enclosed were the incorrect PAT results that had been sent home. The PAT results were shredded. The school that had sent out the results was contacted and the issue was resolved. Of the parents who had participated in the survey, only one reported having not received the PAT results. Overall, 76% of parents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with receiving the locally scored results in June.

5.2 Explanation about the Potential for Variance between Preliminary and Final Marks

A slight majority of parents (59%) said that they were informed of the potential for variance between the preliminary marks and the final marks. Most principals (77%) stated that they or their staff had informed parents and students that the marks could vary. These numbers represent an 18% difference in the percentage of parents who said that they were aware of the potential for variance compared to the percentage of principals who said that parents were informed about the potential. This finding demonstrates that better communication strategies need to be developed between parents and schools regarding this issue.

5.3 Improvement of the Reporting Template

Over half of the principals who used the template provided by Alberta Education did not have any suggestions for its improvement. Principals most commonly asked to have the technical problems (30%) fixed and wanted the process of using the template to be clarified (15%). Sixty-four percent (64%) of teachers reported using the template provided by Alberta Education. There were a few suggestions to improve the template, such suggestions included creating a print function, listing all students at once, enlarging the bubbles and including 'G' for good. The majority of parents (63%) suggested the best method of sending the results home would be to include the results with the student's report card.

5.4 Assistance or Added Value of the Preliminary Results

Most principals (73%) indicated that having the locally scored PAT data available enhanced teachers' understanding of their students' achievement, 27% of principals said the results were not assistive. Seventy-five percent (75%) of teachers agreed that having the locally scored PAT data available enhanced their understanding of their students' achievement.

A majority of parents (74%) indicated that receiving the results assisted or added value to their understanding of their child's level of achievement. While only 40% of principals and 16% of teachers said that they thought receiving the results assisted parents, this low result could be due to the 56% of principals and 72% of teachers who indicated that they did not receive any feedback from parents and could not answer the question. Only 4% of principals, 11% of teachers and 25% of parents said that reporting the results did not assist or add value to their understanding of their child's level of achievement.

The majority of parents surveyed (70%) indicated that reporting the preliminary results assisted or added value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement. A smaller number of principals and teachers (43% and 27%, respectively) thought that receiving the results assisted students; these low results could again be due to the 41% of principals and the 51% of teachers who indicated that they did not receive any feedback from students. Thirty percent (30%) of parents, 16% of principals and 21% of teachers said reporting the results did not assist or add value to students' understanding of their level of achievement. Affirmative responses to the questions indicate that both groups felt that the results assisted or added value to both parents' and students' understanding of the students' level of achievement.

5.5 Comments on Expansion of the Program

A majority of all groups of respondents recommended that the project for reporting preliminary provincial achievement test results for grades 6 and 9 be expanded to all schools. A higher percentage of parents than teachers and principals recommended that Alberta Education expand the program (85% compared to 78% and 72%, respectively). Over ten percent more principals (28%) than parents (15%) recommended that the program not be expanded to all schools. Twenty-two percent (22%) of teachers did not support the expansion of the program to all schools.

Additionally, most principals (91%) indicated that parents or students did not express any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary marks, final marks, or other related issues. Only 9% of principals indicated that concerns did arise with students or parents regarding the potentiality for variance.

Three percent (3%) of principals felt that parents and students were not appreciative of receiving locally scored PAT results in June and few parents (8%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with receiving the results. Many principals and teachers (54% and 51%, respectively) indicated that they thought parents were appreciative about receiving the results. Most parents (77%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with receiving the results in June. These results offer an indication that the pilot project was successful in satisfying parents and that all groups of respondents felt it was worth being expanded.

5.6 Results of Cross-Tabulations/Chi-Square Analyses

The analysis of the cross-tabulated survey items reinforces some of the dynamic relationships which underscore the importance that perceived utility plays in developing support for reporting the preliminary PAT results to parents in June. The majority of parents (70.3%) were in favour of receiving preliminary PAT results in June and also felt that receiving the results added value to their understanding of their child's achievement. Most parents (73.8%) stated they would like to see the pilot expanded to all schools and thought that receiving the results added value to their understanding of their child's achievement. The majority of teachers (83.3%) thought that students and parents were appreciative about receiving PAT results in June and would also like to see the pilot expanded to all schools. A large majority of principals (90.5%) thought that students and parents were appreciative about receiving the PAT results in June and also used their students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark. Most principals (76.7%) thought that reporting PAT results added value to students' understanding of their own level of achievement and also thought that the PAT results added value to parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement.

SECTION 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a set of recommendations based on the results of the 2006 principal, parent and teacher surveys and the 2005 interviews with principals and parents. The results from both studies support the following recommendations:

1. Initiate intensive consultations with the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta School Boards Association and the Alberta Teachers' Association regarding reporting of grade 6/9 provincial achievement test (PAT) results to parent in June over a two year period. In 2006-07, the report should be used to encourage all schools to participate and to communicate PAT results with parents while preparing for universal reporting to parents in June 2008.

Comment: The need for broader dialogue is evident; however, there is also a need to support open and transparent communication between the school and parents in relation to PATs in the short term. Many teachers currently mark and use the results from the PATs as part of their year-end evaluation and almost half the teachers mark and submit scores from the Written Response of the Language Arts tests. This action will honour their current use of the results and inclusion as part of their overall assessment of a student's achievement. Even with the limitations cited in the report there is noted support based on the experience of reporting PAT results in June from all groups surveyed in 2006 and interviewed in 2005 for this initiative. The momentum intended with this recommendation will set the stage for more engaged consultations regarding the related policy environment addressed in recommendation 3. These consultations will also permit consideration of professional development supports, if needed, to facilitate universal implementation in June 2008.

2. Within a context of use of results of PATs, this report provides the basis for additional and more comprehensive dialogue with the Alberta Home and School Councils Association regarding the next steps in planning for more win-win scenarios for the use and interpretation of PAT results with parents in June. As such the report should be circulated on the basis of a broad distribution plan to stimulate enhanced opportunities for on-going dialogue with parents regarding defining more clearly what parents want to know regarding comprehensive assessment information within a holistic approach to assessment communications from teachers to parents.

Comment: Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) are one piece of the bigger picture of student achievement. Depending on point of view, PATs may be perceived as undermining teacher professionalism or alternatively as a key support for teacher judgment of their students' achievement levels. On balance, the results from this pilot evaluation, which were reinforced by the cross-tabulations (chi-square analyses), demonstrates that parents, teachers, and principals appreciate the utility and value of reporting of the grade 6/9 PAT results to parents in June.

3. Department and stakeholder policies and procedures relating to student evaluation or classroom assessment should be reviewed in relationship to this report and with the overall objective of examining how the teaching profession can improve reporting to parents how their children are doing in school.

Comment: The report suggests the existence of multiple and potentially discordant voices around the role of PATs within the context of classroom assessment and the presence of a range of observations regarding how PATs can best fit into the overall context of teachers' classroom assessment and reporting strategies. A comprehensive review of Alberta Education and stakeholder assessment policies undertaken in a consultative context with stakeholders would provide a basis to reconcile conflicting views of the role of PATs. Policy revisions should contribute to defining teachers' professional responsibilities in relationship to the PATs and sections 18 and 20 of the School Act.

4. Better communication strategies should be developed by Alberta Education for parents regarding the potential for variance between preliminary and final PAT results and related issues as a prerequisite for province-wide implementation of this initiative.

Comment: Although a large percentage of principals (91%) indicated that parents or students did not express any concerns about the potential for variance between students' preliminary marks, final marks, or other issues, many parents (42%) stated that they were not aware that their child's preliminary marks could vary from the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education in the fall. Communications are needed to address this and related issues noted in this report, such as:

- *limitations of PAT data*
- *timeliness of PAT results in relationship to classroom-based achievement data,*
- *opportunities for making sense of comprehensive and contextualized achievement data as a means to conveying meaningful information to students and parents;*
- *encouraging continuous dialogue between home and school about students' achievement of program outcomes. Early PAT results are particularly helpful in this dialogue because students have often moved on to a new junior high or high school by the time the Individual Student Profiles (ISPs) are sent out in the fall of the next school year; and*
- *earlier examination by principals and teachers of their students' performance on PATs.*

In order to further clarify the process, it may be useful to develop or adapt communications for parents, teachers, and principals that explain the preliminary reporting of grade 6 and 9 PATs. The newsletter could provide insight to parents about how their child's PAT results relate and interact with other marks from classroom assessments. For teachers and principals, the newsletter could be available from the on-line Toolkit for Teaching Staff (available from http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/toolkit/) For parents and students, the information could be incorporated into the Parent Guide for Provincial Achievement Tests (on-line at http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/), or mailed out at regular intervals. Alberta Education currently distributes copies of the Parent Guides to each school in Alberta in the spring in sufficient quantities to allow for one copy for each family with a child in grade 3, 6, or 9. This allows schools and parents without Internet access the opportunity to read and use the guides.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Parent Survey Form

Grade 6/9 Timely Reporting to Parents and Students Survey Questions for 2006 Pilot Schools

Parent Survey

Alberta Education is currently conducting a study with parents whose children's schools are involved in the 2006 pilot project for reporting preliminary **Provincial Achievement Test (PAT)** results for Grades 6 and 9 to parents and students in June. This is in addition to getting your child's official test results in September. The objective is to give you more timely information on your child's achievement. As the parent or guardian of a child whose school is involved in the pilot project, we are interested in getting your opinions.

Your answers will not be linked to yourself, your child, or your child's school and your responses are protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Questions 1, 2, 4 and 6 provide space for optional comments if you would like to expand on your response choice.

Please return the completed survey to Alberta Education using the attached postage paid envelope by **July 7, 2006**. Thank you!

1. Did reporting of the preliminary PAT results assist or add value to your understanding of your child's achievement?

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

2. Did reporting of the preliminary results assist or add value to your child's understanding of his or her achievement?

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

3. What would be the best method of providing your child's preliminary PAT results to you?

☐ Include **on** child's report card
☐ Send home **with** child's report card
☐ Other _____

4. **How satisfied were you with receiving your child's preliminary PAT results in June?**
- ☐ Very Satisfied: _____
- _____
- ☐ Somewhat Satisfied: _____
- _____
- ☐ Neutral: _____
- _____
- ☐ Somewhat Unsatisfied: _____
- _____
- ☐ Very Unsatisfied: _____
- _____
5. **Were you aware that the preliminary marks could vary from the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education in the fall?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
6. **What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of receiving your child's locally scored PAT marks in June?**
- Advantages: _____
- _____
- Disadvantages: _____
- _____
7. **Are you in favour of receiving the preliminary results of your child's grade 6 or 9 PATs in June?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
8. **Would you like to see Alberta Education expand the preliminary reporting of grade 6/9 PATs project to all schools?**
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

We will be selecting a sample of parents/guardians to be contacted for a follow up phone interview in the fall after the final PAT marks have been sent out to parents. If you would be willing to be in the pool of potential interviewees, please provide your name and telephone number below.

Name: _____

Phone Number: () _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study!

APPENDIX B: Teacher Survey Form

Grade 6/9 Timely Reporting of PAT results to Parents and Students Survey Questions for the 2006 Pilot Schools

Teacher Survey

We are currently conducting a follow up survey with teachers that are involved in the 2006 pilot project for reporting preliminary **Provincial Achievement Test (PAT)** Results for Grades 6 and 9 to parents and students. As a teacher involved in the pilot, we are interested in getting your opinions on your experience with implementing the project.

Your answers will not be linked to yourself, your school or the jurisdiction and your responses are protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. School names will be used only to track questionnaire completions and to organize aggregated data. Several questions provide space for optional comments if you would like to expand on your response choice.

Please return the completed survey to Alberta Education using the attached postage paid envelope by **June 30, 2006**. Thank you!

School: _____

1. Did marking students' PATs in June cause you any challenges?

- ☐ Yes: _____

- ☐ No: _____

2. Did you use the reporting template provided by Alberta Education?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, skip to question 4

3. Do you have any suggestions for its improvement?

4. Have you marked the multiple choice portions of students' PATs in the past?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4b. If yes, for approximately how many years? _____

5. Do you use students' PAT scores as a percentage of their final mark?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Approximately how many minutes per student did it take you to mark the multiple choice portions of your students' PATs?

7. Did having the locally scored PAT data available enhance your understanding of your students' achievement?

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

8. Did reporting of the PAT results assist or otherwise add value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know/did not receive feedback

9. Did reporting of the PAT results assist or otherwise add value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know/did not receive feedback

10. Did any issues or matters of misunderstanding with students and/or parents arise?

☐ With students: _____

☐ With parents: _____

☐ No: _____

11. Would you say students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June?

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

☐ Did not receive any feedback

12. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June?

Advantages: _____

Disadvantages: _____

13. Based on your experience, do you think that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June?

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

We may also contact you in the fall after you have received your students' final PAT marks. If you would be willing to participate, please provide your name and telephone number below. We will select a sample of teachers to be contacted.

Name: _____

Phone Number: () _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study!

APPENDIX C: Principal Survey Form

Grade 6/9 Timely Reporting of PAT results to Parents and Students Survey Questions for 2006 Pilot Schools

Principal Survey

We are currently conducting a study with schools involved in the 2006 pilot project for reporting preliminary **Provincial Achievement Test (PAT)** Results for Grades 6 and 9 to parents and students. As the principal of a school that is involved in the pilot, we are interested in getting your opinions on the school's experience with the project. Your responses will help to further develop the project and provide insight to Alberta Education.

Your answers will not be linked to yourself, your school or the jurisdiction and your responses are protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. School names will be used only to track questionnaire completions and to organize aggregated data. Several questions provide space for optional comments if you would like to expand on your response choice.

Please return the completed survey to Alberta Education using the attached postage paid envelope by **June 30, 2006**. Thank you!

School: _____

What grade(s) in your school is/are involved in the pilot project?

- ☐ Grade 6
- ☐ Grade 9
- ☐ Grades 6 & 9

1. How was your school selected as a pilot school?

- ☐ Volunteered to participate
- ☐ Asked to participate by central office
- ☐ Chosen by central office
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Did local marking cause any challenges for your school staff?

- ☐ Yes: _____

- ☐ No: _____

3. Has your school locally marked PATs in the past?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3b. If yes, for how many years? _____

4. Have locally scored PATs been used as a percentage of students' final marks in the past?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

5. Did you use the reporting template provided by Alberta Education?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If no, skip to question 7

6. Do you have any suggestions for improving the Learner Assessment Branch template?

7. What method did you use to deliver the PAT results to parents?

- ☐ Included **on** child's report card
☐ Sent home **with** child's report card
☐ other _____

8. Did having the locally scored PAT data available enhance teachers' understanding of their students' achievement?

- ☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

9. Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the students' understanding of their level of achievement?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/did not receive feedback
10. Did reporting of the PAT results by the teacher assist or otherwise add value to the parents' understanding of their child's level of achievement?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/did not receive feedback
11. Did you and/or your staff explain to the students and parents that the locally scored marks could vary with the official marks to be provided by Alberta Education in the fall?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
12. Did parents or students express any concerns about the potential for variance between preliminary marks and final marks or other issues?
- ☐ Yes: _____
- _____
- ☐ No: _____
- _____
13. Would you say students and parents were appreciative about receiving locally scored PAT results in June?
- ☐ Yes: _____
- _____
- ☐ No: _____
- _____
- ☐ Did not receive any feedback
14. Do you have any recommendations for Alberta Education regarding how best to communicate to parents the preliminary results of their child's PATs?
- _____
- _____
15. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of providing the locally scored PAT marks to parents in June?
- Advantages: _____
- _____

Disadvantages: _____

- 16. Based on your experience, do you think that all schools should report preliminary PAT results to parents in June?**

☐ Yes: _____

☐ No: _____

Thank you for your time and participation in our study!

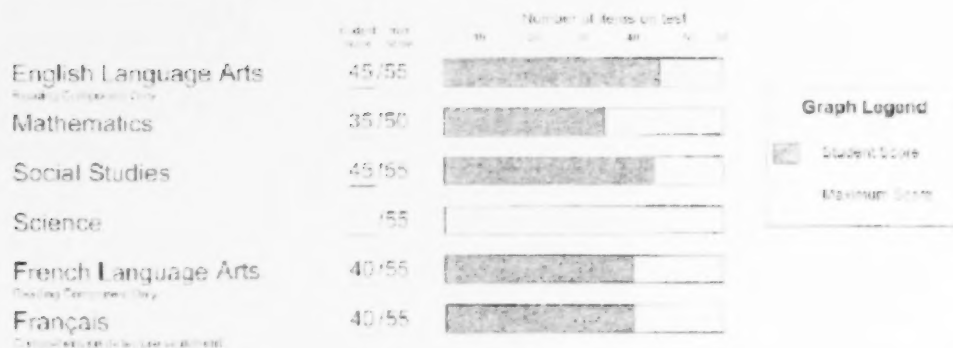
You may be contacted in the fall for a follow-up telephone interview.

APPENDIX D: Reporting Template Provided by Alberta Education

Sample Template for Grade 6 & 9 Preliminary Individual Student Results

Grade 9 Achievement Tests - June 2004

Student Name	Student Name
Alberta Student Number	Student ID
School of Writing	School Name
School Authority	Authority Name



Note to parents: These are preliminary results, based only on the machine-scored portion of each test, without taking into account accommodations students used and other test scoring. The results will not be considered final until provincial marking is complete. Once the results are finalized, a school copy and a parent copy of the Individual Student Profile for your child will be provided to the school where the student wrote the tests. The final results will show your child's performance in relation to provincial standards.

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROFILE (ISP)

Student Name **Smith, Mary**
 Alberta Student Number **123456789**
 School of Writing **1234 Academy**
 School Authority **5678 General**

Grade 9 Achievement Tests - June 2004

Individual Student Profile School Copy



Graph Legend

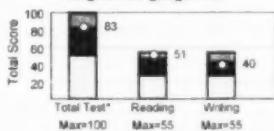
- Standard of Excellence
- Acceptable Standard
- Below Acceptable Standard
- Student Score

Explanatory Notes

The point on each bar graph indicates the score obtained by the student on the total test and on each of the two components of the test.

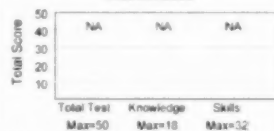
The shaded regions indicate the range of scores at the Standard of Excellence (dark grey region), the Acceptable Standard (black region), and below the acceptable standard (light grey region).

English Language Arts

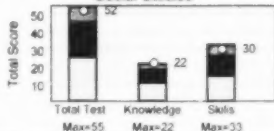


* Reading and Writing are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score

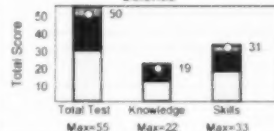
Mathematics



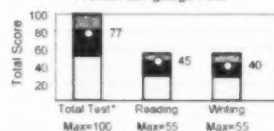
Social Studies



Science



French Language Arts



* Reading and Writing are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score

Student Name **Smith, Mary**
 Alberta Student Number **123456789**
 School of Writing **1234 Academy**
 School Authority **5678 General**

Grade 9 Achievement Tests - June 2004

Individual Student Profile

School Copy



Subject	Component	Student's Results		Range of Scores Within Each Standard ¹	
		Score	Standard Achieved	Acceptable Standard	Standard of Excellence
English Language Arts	Total Test ²	83/100	Excellence	51-82	83-100
	Reading	51/55	Excellence	28-46	47-55
	Writing	40/55	Acceptable	28-43	44-55
Mathematics	Total Test	NA	NA	27-43	44-50
	Knowledge	NA	NA	10-15	16-18
	Skills	NA	NA	17-27	28-32
Social Studies	Total Test	52/55	Excellence	26-45	46-55
	Knowledge	22/22	Excellence	11-18	19-22
	Skills	30/33	Excellence	15-26	27-33
Science	Total Test	50/55	Excellence	30-48	49-55
	Knowledge	19/22	Acceptable	12-19	20-22
	Skills	31/33	Excellence	16-28	29-33
French Language Arts	Total Test ²	77/100	Acceptable	52-81	82-100
	Reading	45/55	Acceptable	29-45	46-55
	Writing	40/55	Acceptable	28-43	44-55

The table above provides the student's scores for each subject and for the components of that subject. Also included is the range of scores that define each standard.

¹ These standards reflect provincial expectations.

² Reading and Writing reporting categories are weighted equally in the calculation of the total score for English Language Arts and French Language Arts.

Alberta Learning is committed to accommodating the needs of all Alberta students in order to provide them with fair and equitable access to educational opportunities, including the writing of Achievement Tests. Accommodations that may be approved by the school superintendent are listed in the General Information Bulletin.

Additional information regarding the results of your school and school authority, as well as provincial results, are available on our web site at http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing.

For further explanation of Achievement Test results, contact Michele Samuel, Director - Achievement Testing Program (e-mail at Michele.Samuel@gov.ab.ca) or Gilbert Guimont, Director - French Assessment Unit (e-mail at Gilbert.Guimont@gov.ab.ca), Learner Assessment Branch or call 780-427-0010 or toll free at 1-800-000-0000.

APPENDIX F: SELECTED ALBERTA EDUCATION ON-LINE DOCUMENTS REGARDING PROVINCIAL ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Alberta Education's Website for Achievement Tests

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/

Achievement Test Frequently Asked Questions: This document provides a quick reference for finding information regarding achievement tests.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/ach_faq.asp

Provincial Achievement Tests: Supporting Excellence in Student Learning in Alberta: This paper provides an overview of Alberta's Achievement Testing Program. The paper touches on the purposes of provincial achievement testing and the nature of the tests, as well as the development, production, administration, and scoring of the tests, and the reporting of results. The paper also includes information about testing programs across the country.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/supporting_excellence/default.asp

Parent Guides: These guides give details on the achievement tests and the curriculum details for each subject area.

Grade 6: http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/parentguides/GR6_ParentGuide_WEB.pdf

Grade 9: http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/parentguides/GR9_ParentGuide_WEB.pdf

Achievement General Information Bulletin: This bulletin contains: testing information, schedules and significant dates in the forthcoming school year; policies and procedures on such things as security, registration of students, administration procedures, plus many more; forms and samples and registration information; and marks and reporting of the results.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/ach_gib/

Achievement Subject Bulletins: Subject bulletins are produced in all the grade 3, 6, and 9 achievement testing subjects. The purpose of subject bulletins is to provide students and teachers with information about the achievement tests for the forthcoming school year.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/achievement/bulletins/default.asp

Toolkit for School Staff: This optional toolkit will help elementary and junior high school staff share information about the provincial Achievement Testing Program. The toolkit addresses general questions about the program and about the *Individual Student Profile* (ISP).

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/toolkit/

School and School Authority Results: This document contains a searchable database where visitors can get the multiyear reports schools and jurisdictions that have had students write diploma examinations or achievement tests. Visitors can search by school or school authority and by subject name.

http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/multipublic/ach/default.cfm



